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## Teacher Competence and Attitude as Correlates of Achievement in Yoruba Language in Ibadan North-West Local Government Area

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### Abstract

This paper explains that Yoruba language is a medium of instruction as stipulated by the National Policy on Education, at pre-primary and primary levels. Despite this importance as a language of instruction and a school subject, many factors militate against its effective teaching. Intervention by scholars, using many strategies has not yielded the needed improvement as poor performance in the subject persists. This paper therefore focused on teacher-related variables such as teacher competence and attitude. It also explains the relationship of these to achievement in Yoruba language. Three research questions were raised and three instruments (Achievement Test in Yoruba Language,  $r=0.78$ ; Teacher Competence Scale,  $r=0.81$ ; Teacher Attitude to Yoruba Language Questionnaire,  $r=0.89$ ) were used to collect data. Two hundred and fifty (250) participants in five public senior secondary schools in Ibadan North-West Local Government were involved in the study. Data collected were analysed using frequency count, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regressions. Findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between teacher competence in Yoruba and students' achievement ( $r=0.532, N=250, P<0.05$ ). There was significant relationship between teacher attitude to Yoruba and students' achievement ( $r=0.711, N=250, P<0.05$ ). Besides, there was 71% variation in the dependent variable as a result of the interaction of teachers' competence and attitude to Yoruba language. It is recommended that teachers of Yoruba language should master the subject, adopt effective teaching strategies and be organised while teaching the subject.

**Keywords:** Teacher, competence, attitude, achievement in Yoruba language

### Introduction

Nigeria is a multilingual nation with diverse ethnic groups and tribes speaking different languages. Simons and Charles (2013) state that there are 527 languages in Nigeria. Some of these languages have greater prominence in national life with Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba being more recognised than others. With the attainment of political independence in Nigeria in 1960 and the need to encourage integration among its heterogeneous population, Nigeria started to encourage the study of the three prominent and major national languages (Araromi, 2005). As a result of the aforementioned, the revised edition of the *National Policy on Education* (NPE) (2004) states *inter alia*:

Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving

cultures. Thus, every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. P5.

It must however, be noted that the policy only recognised the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction at pre-primary and the first three years of primary education after which English language will be the medium of instruction. The indigenous languages will then be taught as school subjects.

Yoruba, as one of the major languages, is a language that is used for study at all levels of education. By way of introduction, Yoruba language study could be said to have its formal take off in the eighteenth century. This was possible through the activities of the early Christian Missionaries in the South Western part of Nigeria (Atanda 1980). On how Yoruba language was reduced into writing, Atanda (1980) notes that in 1819, Thomas Bowdich, one of the missionaries, made a collection of some Yoruba words and printed them for consumption. In 1828, Hannah Kilham also published some Yoruba words. Between 1830 and 1832, Reverend John Raban later published some Yoruba words in three pamphlets. Bishop Ajayi Crowther, in his effort to make the reading of the Bible possible in Yoruba language, helped to translate English Bible to Yoruba. In 1875, efforts were made to develop a general acceptable orthography of Yoruba language. These publications drew the attention of the Nigerian educators particularly the lovers of Yoruba language to think of the need to study Yoruba language. Meanwhile, Adeyinka (2005) observes that Yoruba language which is one of the languages made compulsory by the *National Policy on Education* in Nigeria (NPE, 2004), is the mother tongue of the people who now occupy what is known as Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ekiti, Ondo, Kwara, Kogi and Lagos States. Yoruba people are also found spread in different parts of the world, such as neighbouring West African countries of Republic of Benin, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone; South American countries of Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago; and Central America. Furthermore, Ojo (2006) asserts that the teaching and learning of Yoruba language has developed even beyond the shores of Africa. In Europe and the rest of the world, Yoruba language is offered as part of various foreign languages.

Despite the perceived importance of Yoruba language as a medium of instruction and as a school subject, a number of factors militate against the effective teaching and learning of Yoruba language in Nigeria. These factors include insufficient number of qualified teachers, lack of useful textbooks to support effective teaching, poor remuneration of Yoruba language teachers, and negative attitude from parents, students and poor teaching methods (Olagbaju, 2010). Efforts to address these problems had made researchers to experiment with many instructional strategies capable of improving performance in the language among secondary school students. These instructional strategies include: multi-cultural approach (Olagbaju, 2010); peer-tutoring and bilingual strategies (Adeoye, 2014) and semantic gradients strategy (Ogunmola, 2015). In spite of the significant contribution of these studies to the teaching and learning of Yoruba language, the trend of poor performance in the subject still persist. Scholars have therefore suggested shifting focus from teaching strategies to other teacher-related variables. This is because they observed that improvement of teaching

alone cannot stop the problem of poor academic performance (Obemeata, 1995). Such suggested teacher-related variables include teacher competence and attitude.

Teacher competence, according to Fakeye and Aiyede (2013), refers to the overall effectiveness of the teacher in the teaching/learning process. The indices of teacher competence, as documented in literature, are: subject-matter mastery; adopting effective teaching strategies, instructional organization, ability to link previous knowledge with new learning; ability to differentiate instruction to suit various activities and interest in the class; use of appropriate assessment strategies and active involvement of learners in lessons (Fakeye, 2008; Aiyede, 2010; Ogunyinka, 2011; and Amokeodo, 2011).

Over time, learners' academic performance in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teachers and teaching (Ajao, 2001). Afe (2001) posits that teachers have shown to have an important influence on students' academic achievement and they play a crucial role in educational attainment because they are ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with students. Teacher's competence enhances a teacher's ability to create an environment that is fair, understanding, and accepting of diverse students' ideas, experiences and backgrounds. Teachers have been found to be the single most important factor influencing students' achievement.

A world summit on teaching (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001) notes that teachers need to help students acquire not only the skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test but more importantly, ways of thinking (creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision making and learning); ways of working (communication and collaboration); tools for working (including ICT); and skills around citizenship, life and career, personal and social responsibility for success in modern democracies. To be fully effective in teaching and capable of adjusting to the evolving needs of learners in a world of rapid social, cultural, economic and technological change therefore, teachers themselves need to reflect on their own learning requirements in the context of their particular school environment, and to take greater responsibility for their own lifelong learning as a means of updating and developing their own knowledge and skills.

Attitude represents an individual's degree of likes or dislikes for something, person, place, process, thing or event. In other words, attitudes are positive or negative feelings that an individual holds about objects or idea. Researchers have shown that positive attitudes enhance teaching/learning performance in the learning of a language while negative attitudes inhibit it (Larsen – Freeman, 2003; Kolawole, 2003; Adebisi, 2006; Fakeye, 2010 and Ogunyemi, 2014). Students' attitude to a subject, according to Chikwendu (2015), is an important indicator of their success or failure in that subject. The development of the right attitude to teaching by a teacher is therefore crucial to the attainment of good performance in any learning endeavour (Odiaka, 2002; Ayanniyi, 2009). According to Lawal (2010), attitude to teaching and learning could be positive or negative and is capable of facilitating or hindering the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Also learners' attitude towards a subject could be influenced by the teachers' attitude to the subject. (Ogunwuyi, 2000; Eggen and Kauchak 2001).

## Statement of the Problem

Yoruba language is offered in the school curriculum because of its numerous benefits - means of communication among tribes in market places, for business purposes, in social gatherings, among other tribes to ease interaction and at school to teach and explain concepts which are not clear enough to the learners. However, as Yoruba language is being taught in schools, students' performance in the subject has not been impressive. Studies have been conducted to identify instructional strategies capable of improving academic performance of learners of Yoruba language (Olagbaju, 2010; Adeoye, 2014). These and numerous studies have focused more on instructional strategies and students' variables as significant to achievement in language teaching/learning. There is therefore the need to find out through research the influence of teacher - related variables on teacher's competence and attitude to students' achievement in Yoruba language. Previous studies have proved the influence of competence and attitude of teacher on students' performance independently and not combined as being considered in this study. Therefore, this study investigated teachers' competence and attitude as correlates of students' achievement in Yoruba language in Ibadan Northwest Local Government Area of Oyo state.

## Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. What relationship exists between teachers' attitude to Yoruba language and students' academic achievement in Ibadan Northwest Local Government Area of Oyo state?
2. What is the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?
3. What is relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?

## Theoretical Framework

The theory that underpins this study is attribution theory. Attribution theory was initially propounded by Heider in 1958 but was further developed by Bernard Weiner, a prominent cognitive psychologist in 1972. Attribution theory addresses the causes of human motivation. It deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanations for events, the behaviour of others and of themselves. It examines what information people get and how such information is combined to make a causal judgment, thus making sense out of their world. Generally, situations are analysed by making inferences which are usually beyond the information gathered. Attributions are made to achieve cognition control over life by showing understanding of the reasons behind behaviour and environmental occurrences. This gives order and predictability and enables people cope with their occurrences.

Attribution theory is related to teacher's competence and attitude as variables in this study. It is believed that what leads to students' success or otherwise is in the teachers' competence and attitude. Such students are likely to look inward to discover what they can do to ensure academic success. The students' poor academic achievement is explained in terms of prevailing circumstances around them. According to McLeod (2010), this could be attitude of the teacher and his/her competence among other factors.

The theory of attribution provides the bedrock for this study as it helps to investigate what can be attributed as influencing learning outcome in Yoruba language and how these perceptions influence their achievement in the subject.

## Methodology

**Research design:** The descriptive research design of correlational type was adopted for the study. This considered the attitude and competence of Yoruba language teachers and their relationship with students and achievement in Yoruba language.

**Population:** The target population for this study was senior secondary (SS) two Yoruba language students and their teachers in Ibadan Northwest Local Government Area of Oyo State.

**Sampling technique and sample size:** Simple random sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools from Ibadan North-West Local Government Area of Oyo State. Fifty (50) Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students were randomly selected from each of the schools making a total of 250 students. Each school has a Yoruba teacher hence, five Yoruba language teachers participated in this study.

**Research instruments and validation:** Three instruments were used to collect data in this study. These were Achievement Test in Yoruba Language (ATYL); Teacher Competence Scale (TCS); and Teacher Attitude to Yoruba Language Questionnaire (TAYLQ).

**Achievement Test in Yoruba Language (ATYL)** was a self-designed instrument that contained 25 items multiple choice questions (with options lettered A, B, C, D) drawn from SS 2 Yoruba textbooks. The instrument was shown to five Yoruba language teachers in five different schools in another local government outside the study area and Language Education experts for face and content validity. Modifications were made and the final one was administered on 25 randomly selected students from a different school outside the schools used for this study. Cronbach alpha statistics was used and a value of 0.78 was obtained.

**Teacher Competence Scale** instrument was self-designed to rate the competence level of the five Yoruba language teachers that participated in the study. The instrument is made up of 20 items of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 rating. The scale was administered on a sample of two teachers from schools not included in the study to test its validity and using inter-rater reliability, a value of 0.81 was obtained using Scott Pie test statistics.

**Teacher Attitude to Yoruba Language Questionnaire (TAYLQ)** was self-designed and administered on Yoruba teachers. It contained 20 items structured along modified four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Positively worded items were scored 4, 3, 2, 1 for SA, A, SD, D respectively while it was scored in the reverse order for negatively-worded items. Face and content validity was determined by experts in Language Education while reliability was done by administering it on two teachers in another area, outside the area of study and Cronbach alpha was used to calculate. The reliability index was 0.89.

**Procedure for Data Collection:** The researcher personally administered both the Teacher Competence Scale and the Teacher Attitude to Yoruba Language Questionnaire. Meanwhile, the class teachers assisted in administering the Achievement Test in Yoruba Language to the students. All the instruments were collected back on the spot.



**Method of Data Analysis:** Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) test statistic was used to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable at 0.05 level of significance. Multiple Regression was used to determine the relative and joint contributions of independent variables to the dependent variable.

## Results and Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the results and findings of the study.

### Answering of Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What relationship exists between teachers' attitude to Yoruba language and students' academic achievement in Ibadan North West Local Government Area of Oyo State?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' attitude to Yoruba language

| Variable             | Mean  | Standard Deviation | N   | r*      | p     | Remark |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|-----|---------|-------|--------|
| Academic Achievement | 14.00 | 1.417              | 250 | 0.711** | 0.000 | Sig.   |
| Attitude to Yoruba   | 65.6  | 4.185              |     |         |       |        |

\*r= Correlation coefficient

\*\* Value is significant at 0.05 level

The results presented in Table 1 above shows that there is a significant relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' attitude to Yoruba language ( $r=0.711$ ,  $N=250$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). This reveals that the positive attitude of Yoruba language teachers in study area enhance positive academic achievement of Yoruba language students.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' competence in Yoruba language

| Variable             | Mean  | Standard Deviation | N   | r*      | p     | Remark |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|-----|---------|-------|--------|
| Academic Achievement | 14.00 | 1.417              | 250 | 0.532** | 0.000 | Sig.   |
| Attitude to Yoruba   | 27.60 | 5.863              |     |         |       |        |

\*r= Correlation coefficient

\*\* Value is significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 reveals that there is a positive significant relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' competence in Yoruba language ( $r=0.532$ ,  $N=250$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). This indicates that teachers' competence in Yoruba language teaching results in high academic achievement of the students in the study area.

**Research Question Two:** What is the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?

Table 3: Joint Contribution of Independent Variables (Teachers' Attitude to Yoruba and Teachers' Competence) on Students' Academic Achievement (Dependent Variable)

| R     | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Standard Error of the Estimate |
|-------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0.843 | 0.710    | 0.708             | 0.766                          |

Table 3 shows the joint contribution of the two independent variables to prediction of the dependent variable. The value of coefficient of multiple correlation ( $r=0.843$ ) indicates a strong positive relationship between joint independent variables and the dependent variable while the coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2=0.710$ ) means that 71 percent variation in the dependent variable (students' academic achievement) is explained by the interaction of teachers' competence in and attitude to Yoruba language in the study area.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Regression Analysis

|              | Sum of Square  | Degree of Freedom | Mean Square | F - ratio | P     | Remark |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Regression   | 355.073        | 2                 | 177.536     | 301.577   | 0.000 | Sig.   |
| Residual     | 144.927        | 247               | 0.587       |           |       |        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>500.000</b> | <b>249</b>        |             |           |       |        |

The significance of the composite contribution was tested at  $p<0.05$ . The Table 4 above shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded an F - ratio of 301.577 (significant at 0.05 level). This result also corroborates initial result that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may account for the remaining variance (about 29 percent).

**Research Question Three:** What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable?

Table 5: The Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables to the Dependent Variable

| Variable             | Unstandardised Coefficient |            | Standardised Coefficient | T      | Sig.   | Remark  |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
|                      | -                          | Std. Error |                          |        |        |         |
| Model                | -                          |            | Beta ( $\beta$ )         |        |        |         |
| Constant             | -1.207                     | 0.654      | 0.0000                   | -1.846 | 0.066  | Not Sig |
| Teachers' Competence | 0.223                      | 0.012      | 0.658                    | 19.085 | 0.000* | Sig.    |
| Teachers' Attitude   | 0.110                      | 0.008      | 0.455                    | 13.198 | 0.000* | Sig.    |

The relative contribution of teacher competence in ( $\beta = 0.658; t = 19.085, P < 0.05$ ) and teacher attitude to Yoruba language ( $\beta = 0.455; t = 13.198, P < 0.05$ ) to students' achievement in Yoruba language were significant.

## Discussion of Findings

### *The Relationship between Students' Academic Achievement and Teachers' Attitude to Yoruba Language*

Findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' attitude to Yoruba language learning. A probable explanation for this findings is that positive attitude of Yoruba language teachers will result in effective teaching of the subject and thus reflect in improved students' academic achievement which agreed with Ogunwuyi's (2000) report that teachers' attitude towards science is a potent predictor of students' academic achievement in science and attitude towards science learning. This can also imply that the positive attitude of teachers towards Yoruba language resulted in the improved achievement of students in the subject. According to Yara (2009), teachers' attitude and his method of teaching can greatly influence the students' attitude towards school subjects.

### *The joint Contribution of the Independent Variables (Attitude to Yoruba Language and Teachers' Competence) to Students' Academic Achievement*

A probable explanation for this finding is that attitude and teachers' competence are string determinants of academic success. This finding agrees with Eggen and Kauchak (2001) which claims that positive teachers' attitude are fundamental to effective teaching.

### *The relative Contribution of the Independent Variables (Attitude to Yoruba language and Teachers' Competence) to Students' Academic Achievement*

Findings revealed that there is a relative significance between attitude to Yoruba language and teachers' competence. A probable explanation for this finding is that if the attitude of the teacher to the teaching of Yoruba language is negative it will affect the students' performances negatively, but if the attitude of teacher to the teaching of Yoruba language is positive, it will enhance the students' performance positively. This finding agrees with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001) which indicated that

competence remains one major determinants of students' academic achievement. The finding also agrees with Fakeye and Aiyede (2013) who claimed that teachers' competences have powerful effects on students' outcomes.

## Conclusion

From the findings of the study it can be concluded that positive attitude and teachers' competence in teaching Yoruba language as a subject in secondary schools will positively enhance students' academic achievement in Yoruba language. If the performance of students in Yoruba language will improve in our secondary schools, teachers of the language would have to be trained and re-trained by the government, they would have to be adequately and handsomely remunerated while more teachers of the subject would have to be employed in order to cater for inadequate number of teachers of Yoruba in secondary schools in the area of study. This will, no doubt, promote positive attitude to the subject.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made for the teachers, students and parents.

1. Yoruba language teachers should endeavour to exhibit positive attitudes towards Yoruba language.
2. Yoruba language teachers should be encouraged to attend programmes and activities that will help improve their knowledge base and competence in the teaching of Yoruba language.
3. Students' should develop interest in Yoruba language by being attentive in Yoruba lesson classes.
4. Students should also engage in activities in Yoruba language that can help improve their knowledge and achievement.

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